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homemakers' chat
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WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 29, 1943.

Subject: "FAMILY FOOD PLANS." Information from Home economists of U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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Nineteen forty-three brought homemakers plenty of problems to work out, what with shortages, rationing, and a constantly-changing food situation. And now you're rpobably wondering, "What about food in 1944 --will I be able to give my family the nutrition they need?"

The answer to this question is, Yes. You can give your family a wholesome, nourishing diet in spite of wartime restrictions on certain foods. There will probably be less meat, and fewer dairy products, in 1944, but you'll get as much chicken, eggs, fresh fruit and vegetables, potatoes, dried beans and peas, and fats and oils, as in 1943, and there'll be plenty of cereals.

Already you've solved many of the problems connected with planning meals in wartime. And to help you further with this job, the Bureau of Human Nutrition and Home Economics of the U.S. Department of Agriculture has just published a new free folder called "Family Food Plans for Good Nutrition."

This folder shows you how to figure out the nutritional needs of your family, taking into consideration the different requirements for persons of different ages and occupations. The folder includes two plans: one for low-cost meals, and one for meals of moderate cost. And each plan is adjustable so you can fit it right in with local food supplies, rationing changes, and the tastes of your own family.

These food plans don't give each meal in detail, dish by dish. What they do is show you how to make your own meal plans so as to include the right foods in the right amounts for your particular family.

Inside the food plan folder there's a large chart, which shows all the kinds of food needed for good health: The foods are divided into these groups: milk... potatoes...dry beans and peas... citrus fruits and tomatoes... green and yellow vegetables... other vegetables and fruit... eggs... meat, fish, and poultry... flour and cereals...fats and oils...and sugar, sirups, and preserves.

This chart showing the food groups also tells you how many times a week to serve foods from each of the groups. For example, you'll want to serve milk, and citrus fruit or tomatoes, every day... dry beans three or four times a week under the low-cost plan, and once or twice a week for the moderate-cost plan. The low-cost plan calls for green and yellow vegetables six or seven times a week, while under the moderate-cost plan you'd serve them about twice as often.

Of course both meal plans include all the essential food elements you need, but the low-cost plan uses more of the cheaper foods, such as dry beans, potatoes, and grain products. On the other hand, the moderate-cost meals put somewhat more stress on meat, eggs, fruits, and vegetables-- which gives you an extra margin of minerals and vitamins. The moderate-cost meals get variety from the use of a wider choice of foods, while the low-cost plan relies more on different combinations of foods and flavors.

The actual cost of either food plan depends on several factors-- your local prices, the grades of food you buy, and your own thrift and cooking skill. Another factor is, whether you grow any of your own food. If you have home-grown vegetables, fruit, eggs, poultry, or meat, you can improve the family diet accordingly and at the same time keep down your family food bill.

In the food plan folder, each plan is arranged to show how much food of each group is needed weekly by persons of varying ages and activities. There's a space at the bottom of each plan where you can list the members of your family, and fill in the food requirements for each one.

For example, if your husband's a farmer, he'll need about seven pounds of

potatoes a week, and nine pounds of flour products and cereals, under the low-cost meal plan. If your daughter works in an office, she'll need only about three pounds of potatoes, and three and a half pounds of flour and cereals. The plan shows you how to figure out what each member of the family needs, from Dad down to the baby. After you've listed the food for each person, add up the figures, and there you have the amounts of each kind of food that you'll need for all your twenty-one meals of the week.

According to the plan in the folder, either the low-cost or the moderate-cost meals will give your family the recommended amounts of food energy, protein, vitamins, and minerals. But to get the most out of these food plans, it's important to buy carefully, store food properly, prepare it with care, and use every bit that's usable.

Before you decide which plan to follow-- the low-cost or the moderate--keep a record of the food that comes into your kitchen for a week or two. Then compare this record with the charts in the folder, and see how your present diet measures up in cost and nutrition.

Feeding your family well is going to be one of your biggest jobs in the new year. Every day Americans are more conscious of what nutrition means in the welfare of our nation. As Secretary of Agriculture Wickard said not long ago, "In war, especially modern warfare, we need to develop our fighting capacity, our production capacity, and our general stamina to the highest level. War drives home to us the fact that it pays to have people properly fed."

The new food plan folder will help you in your job as family meal-planner during 1944, by showing you how to stay within your food allowance and still assure the family of good nutrition. You can get a copy of the folder by writing to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington 25, D. C. Ask for "Family Food Plans."

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